

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-15 ACDA-12 MCT-01 IO-14 /097 W  
-----118550 250008Z /61

R 241358Z JAN 78  
FM AMCONSUL BELFAST  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1847  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

UNCLAS BELFAST 17

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, UK  
SUBJECT: IRA ATTACKS DISPLAY NEW SOPHISTICATION IN WEAPONRY

REF:BELFAST 16

1. EIGHT SOLDIERS AND THREE POLICEMEN WERE INJURED JANUARY 23RD IN AN IRA MORTAR ATTACK ON THE COMBINED ARMY-POLICE BASE NEAR THE BORDER AT FORKHILL IN SOUTH ARMAGH. THE ATTACKERS PARKED A HIJACKED TRUCK IN A HOUSING ESTATE WITHIN 100 YARDS OF THE BASE (THOUGH OUT-OF-SIGHT OF THE GARRISON'S HIGH WATCH TOWER). THE TWO MORTAR SHELLS, EACH ESTIMATED TO CONTAIN 50 POUNDS OF EXPLOSIVE, WERE AUTOMATICALLY FIRED BY A DELAYED ACTION TIMER. A POLICE SPOKESMAN INDICATES THAT THIS GAVE THE ATTACKERS TIME TO CROSS OVER THE BORDER BEFORE THE MORTARS WERE ACTUALLY FIRED.

2. THE EIGHT SOLDIERS WERE INJURED WHEN THE MORTAR SHELLS DAMAGED THE BARRACKS AREA. THE THREE POLICEMEN, TWO OF WHOM WERE SERIOUSLY HURT, WERE INJURED WHEN A HIDDEN BOMB IN THE TRUCK THAT CARRIED THE MORTAR TUBES EXPLODED WHEN THE POLICE ATTEMPTED TO MOVE IT. THE TRUCK HAD BEEN CHECKED BY BOTH ARMY AND POLICE BOMB EXPERTS, BUT THE DEVICE HAD NOT BEEN DISCOVERED.  
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3. AN ARMY SPOKESMAN DESCRIBED BOTH THE MORTARS AND THE HIDDEN BOMB AS REPRESENTING A NEW AND HIGHER LEVEL OF SOPHISTICATION FOR THE IRA. BEARING OUT THIS NEW LEVEL OF SOPHISTICATED IRA WEAPONRY WAS THE POLICE ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE SAME DAY THAT THE SNIPER ATTACK ON THE POLICE IN LONDONDERRY ON JANUARY 19 (REFTEL) HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT WITH "AN AMERICAN MADE M-60" DESCRIBED

BY THE POLICE AS A "FAR SUPERIOR" WEAPON TO ANY NOW BEING USED  
HERE EITHER BY THE ARMY OR THE POLICE. THE SPOKESMAN STATED  
THAT SEVERAL M-60S HAD FOUND THEIR WAY INTO THE IRA ARSENAL  
IN RECENT MONTHS. THE POLICE DID NOT CONJECTURE AS TO THE  
ULTIMATE SOURCE OF SUPPLY FOR THESE WEAPONS BUT THE BELFAST NEWS  
LETTER QUOTED "USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCES" AS SAYING THAT THE  
M-60S "ARRIVED IN THE PROVINCE VIA EIRE A FEW MONTHS AGO."ROY

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** BOMBING, REPORTS, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 24 jan 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
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**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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